

Activity 4 – Look here

Part 1 – An Overview (screen only; 1 minute)

The Lake District National Park

National Parks are areas of countryside protected from over-development and available to the public for recreation. Since the 1950s, 15 National Parks have been established in the UK.

This talk is about the Lake District National Park. It will cover the location of the park, its geography and the activities that visitors can do there. First, though, let's get an overview of the area.

The Lake District was designated a National Park in 1951. It is the second biggest National Park in the UK, after the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland. In 2017 it was given the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site.

It has been a popular tourist destination for hundreds of years, made famous by poets, artists, and composers who have found the landscape inspiring. William Wordsworth lived there, and so did Beatrix Potter.

These days, The Lake District usually attracts around 16 million visitors each year, many of whom come to have a holiday. They relax by walking and climbing in the hills, sailing and swimming in the lakes and visiting famous places like Dove Cottage, which is where Wordsworth lived.

Activity 4 – Look here

Part 2 – location (face; 1½ minutes)

The Lake District is located within the county of Cumbria, in the north west of England. It is famous for its beautiful rural landscapes, made up of lakes and hills, and it also includes some coastal landscape on the south-west border, though not the two large peninsulas in the south of Cumbria.

From east to west it's about 32 miles across, and its eastern border is marked by the M6. From north to south it measures about 40 miles, with the A595 running along the top. The major towns Carlisle, Penrith and Kendal are all just outside of the National Park boundaries, though they provide useful services for visitors to the area.

Because it is on the west coast, and quite mountainous, it is known as a rather wet place – in fact it's the wettest place in England! - so visitors need to be prepared for rainy days as well as sunny days, even in the summer months. At the coast and on the mountain tops it is also likely to be very windy, though in the valleys it is usually more sheltered. The temperature in the low-lying areas has a small range, only varying between about 3°C and 15°C. Snow is usually confined to the tops of the hills.

Activity 4 – Look here

Part 3 – Geography: mountains, lakes (face, maps / pictures; 2 minutes)

The Lake District National Park - the lakes and fells

There are sixteen major lakes in the Lake District, and many other smaller bodies of water. Only one is actually officially called a 'lake' though - that's Bassenthwaite Lake.

If we look at this map, you can see it here in the north of the national park.

The other lakes have 'mere' or 'water' in the title, or the smaller ones may be called tarns. For example, the longest lake in England is Windermere, which we can see here. This is also perhaps the most famous and certainly the most visited, since it is the first major lake that visitors meet when they come from the south, and it has a lovely open feel to it, as this picture shows.

The deepest body of water is Wast Water, which is located here in the west of the park, marked with a circle on this map. That lake is popular with divers, but is known for its dark and quite forbidding landscape, as this picture illustrates.

Where there are lakes there are often mountains, of course, and the hills here are known as the Lakeland Fells. They include Scafell Pike which is the highest point in England. You can see it marked here, near Wast Water. Helvellyn (marked here) is also a very popular summit to visit, and is famous for the narrow path approaching it, called 'Striding Edge'. This picture shows how dramatic the scenery is.

Activity 4 – Look here

Section 4 – Things to do (images and maps; 2 minutes)

The Lake District National Park – things to do

If you visit the Lake District you'll probably come first to Windermere. And what a lot of people like to do is to take a boat on the water. You can either hire one to sail yourself, or join an organised group.

A little further north, on Ullswater, you can have a ride on the famous steamer on the lake.

As you go over Honister Pass, remember to stop at the slate mine and see what's happening there. You can pick up some lovely gifts for your friends and family. And of course, if you're feeling really brave, you can have a go on the via ferrata.

Or just walk on the hills, either on your own, or with some friends.

Or you could visit Grizedale Forest Park – it's lovely just to walk through the woods, and now and again you see little wooden sculptures.

Watch out for the sheep! They're everywhere – there's loads of them. And some of them are watching you!

And of course, look out for the red squirrels. There aren't many places in Britain that still have red squirrels.

Wordsworth lived here, remember, so one thing you could do is to visit his house, Dove Cottage. You can see the daffodils that he wrote about in his famous poem, and you can see where he and Dorothy are buried.

Beatrix Potter also lived here, and you can visit her house, too, and look out for the animals that she made famous in her stories. Here's Mrs Tiggly-Winkle, and of course Squirrel Nutkin.

Even on a rainy day, there's still plenty to do. Keswick has a very famous pencil museum. And there's the Lakes Aquarium, too.

And if nothing else, you can always enjoy a lovely meal of fish and chips, or an afternoon cream tea, looking out over the lakes.

Whatever you decide to do, I'm sure you'll enjoy it.